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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [KU](#) [IZ](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAQ](#) [RELATIONS](#)
SUBJECT: IRAQI PM MALIKI LEADS MINISTERIAL DELEGATION ON
WHIRLWIND VISIT TO KUWAIT

REF: BAGDHAD 2401

Classified By: CDA Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (S/NF) MFA Under Secretary Khalid Jarallah told CDA on July 10 that the visit of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki had been "very very positive" and that Maliki had made a good impression on GOK officials. His reconciliation initiative briefing elicited promises of "full support" from the Amir. The Amir proposed that Kuwait and Iraq establish a joint committee chaired by Foreign Ministers to meet periodically and discuss bilateral issues. Reportedly, Maliki agreed and said he would instruct FM Zebari to follow up with his GOK counterpart.

¶2. (S/NF) The Amir raised Kuwaiti concerns over the status of Sunnis in Basra. Maliki said he was aware of the attacks against Sunnis and blamed it on "certain parties" who had an interest in creating a difficult situation for his government. He stated that steps were being taken to improve the situation.

¶3. (S/NF) The Amir and PM Maliki also discussed at some length the "Iraq neighbors" framework and the meeting that was to take place shortly in Tehran. (Note: The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister attended the Tehran meeting after Maliki's visit and is due to return to Kuwait the afternoon of July ¶10. End Note.) According to Jarallah, the Amir and Maliki shared the view that the Iraqi neighbors meetings were unlikely to produce anything positive or of concrete value. The Amir suggested that Maliki look at developing a forum in which "three or four of Iraq's neighbors", those prepared to be practical and positive, could work closely with Baghdad to support the GOI in its efforts. Jarallah said Maliki seemed to welcome the suggestion and promised to study it further.

¶4. (S/NF) Contrary to report in reftel, Jarallah said that no timeframe for exchange of Ambassadors had been decided, but the GOK confirmed to the Iraqi delegation that retired Chief of Staff General Ali Mu'min would be Kuwait's Ambassador once conditions permitted the opening of an Embassy in Baghdad. Maliki informed the Amir that the GOI would be extending an invitation to the GOK to attend the Iraq Compact meeting in Baghdad later this month. In response to CDA's query, Jarallah said he thought it was likely that Kuwait would send a representative.

¶5. (U) Iraqi Charge in Kuwait Hamid Al-Sharifi told PolChief July 9 that Maliki's visit to Kuwait was cut short because of unspecified urgent business in Iraq, leaving insufficient time for substantive bilateral talks. Maliki and delegation (Electricity Minister Karim Wahid al-Hassan, Defense Minister Qader Jassim al-Mufraji, Environment

Minister Narmine Othman, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Rafia al-Issawi, Communications Minister Muhammad Allawi, and Oil Minister Husayn Shahrastani) arrived Tuesday July 4 and were expected to stay until the 6th before traveling to Jordan. The delegation instead departed on July 5 after a meeting with the Amir and a group meeting with Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and Interior Shaykh Jaber Mubarak Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, Energy Minister Shaykh Ahmed Fahd Al-Sabah, and Communications Minister Shaykh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

¶6. (C/NF) Al-Sharifi reported the two sides briefly addressed debt forgiveness, reconstruction loans which the Amir purportedly promised at 1.5% interest, and Iraq's gas shortage which the Kuwaiti Energy Minister blamed on temporary technical problems. The two sides also agreed to form a joint committee at the expert level to look into compensation issues. On diplomatic representation, Al-Sharifi, like Jarallah, said there was not much progress on the exchange of ambassadors. Mu'min was Kuwait's ambassador-designate and Al-Sharifi added that a team had inspected the Kuwaiti chancery. (MFA advised us that Bahraini diplomats had made a visit to the Kuwaiti chancery and filed a report.) Al-Sharifi described the chancery as dilapidated and located outside of the Green Zone. He remarked that he offered his personal property inside the Zone to Kuwait for construction of a new embassy. According to Al-Sharifi, several Iraqi Islamist groups want their representatives assigned to Kuwait and Kuwaiti FM Shaykh Dr. Mohammed previously urged Zebari to send a "secular" ambassador to Kuwait.

KUWAIT 00002776 002 OF 002

¶7. (SBU) PM Maliki also met with representatives of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a meeting Al-Sharifi said the Amir insisted occur. KCCI Chairman Ali Al-Ghanim urged the GOI to resolve all outstanding economic issues with Kuwait in order to create the conditions necessary to attract Kuwaiti investment. He further noted GOK interest in immediate investment in Kurdistan. There was considerable press coverage of the Iraqi delegation's visit and Maliki had a round table discussion with editors of local Arabic- and English-language papers.

¶8. (C/NF) Al-Sharifi cut the meeting short, explaining he was on his way to the airport to meet an unnamed representative of Muqtada al-Sadr who was arriving from Syria. He said the envoy was traveling to Kuwait at the invitation of Al-Shahad newspaper publisher Shaykh Sabah Mohammed Al-Sabah and expected meetings to focus on investment and business opportunities.

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